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Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan

Letter dated 19 January 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I would like to draw your attention to the latest provocation by the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia along the State border with the Republic of Azerbaijan.

On 12 January 2017, an explosive device consisting of an electric detonator, a detonation cord, a large amount of shrapnel and batteries for activation was identified in the territory of the Tovuz district of the Republic of Azerbaijan, in the vicinity of the State border. The explosive device, prohibited under the relevant international instruments, was thrown into the area by an unmanned aerial vehicle belonging to the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia and was aimed at targeting both the civilians residing in the area and the servicemen of the armed forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan deployed there.

This is not the first instance of such despicable acts by the Armenian side; it is in addition to numerous grave violations of international humanitarian law amounting to war crimes, crimes against humanity and acts of genocide committed by its armed forces and subordinate military and paramilitary formations in the course of the conflict.

Suffice it to recall what happened on 14 July 2011 in the village of Alibayli of the same Tovuz district of the Republic of Azerbaijan, bordering with the Republic of Armenia. That day, as a result of the blast of an explosive device built in a toy, a 13-year-old Azerbaijani girl, Aygun Shahmaliyeva, was killed and her 32-year-old mother, Elnara Shahmaliyeva, was seriously wounded. The toy stuffed with an explosive device was found by the victim in the Tovuz River, which springs from the territory of Armenia and flows through the village of Alibayli. The booby-trap

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toy was made in Armenia, was dropped in the river intentionally and its target was children of the neighbouring Azerbaijani settlements (see A/65/915-S/2011/457).

Against the background of its persistent refusal to engage in substantive and result-oriented negotiations on the resolution of the conflict, the recent provocative action of throwing an explosive device by an unmanned aerial vehicle, which was resorted to by the Armenian side two weeks after an attempted incursion by its armed forces through the State border into the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan (see A/71/740-S/2016/1140), is yet further proof of Yerevan's deliberate attempts to increase tensions, escalate the situation on the ground and obstruct the peace process.

As we have repeatedly stated, the only way to achieve a durable and lasting solution is to ensure the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces from the Nagorno-Karabakh region and from other occupied territories of Azerbaijan. That is what international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions demand. The implementation of that peremptory obligation, which emanates in accordance with Article 2 (4) of the Charter of the United Nations from the principle of non-use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of any State, can in no way be conditioned, introduced as a compromise or used as a bargaining chip in the conflict settlement process.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 32 and 37, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yashar **Aliyev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative